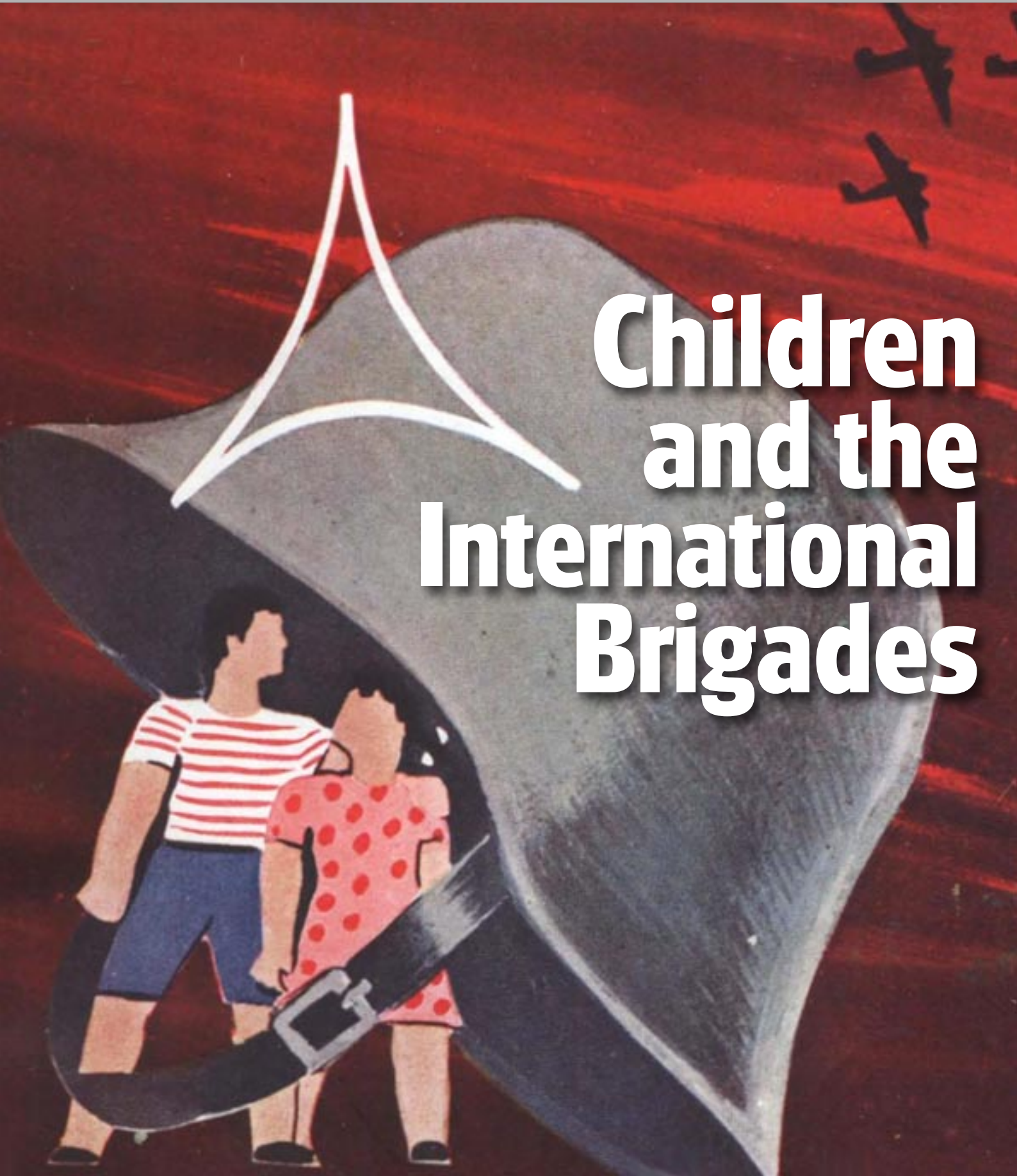




# ¡NO PASARÁN!

International Brigade Memorial Trust ● 2-2022 ● £5

## Children and the International Brigades





**Saturday 2 July 2022, 1pm**

Music ● Speakers ● Remembrance

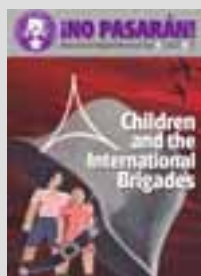
**International Brigade Memorial  
Jubilee Gardens, London Southbank**

**INTERNATIONAL BRIGADE  
ANNUAL COMMEMORATION**

**International Brigade Memorial Trust**

[www.international-brigades.org.uk](http://www.international-brigades.org.uk)





◀ Cover art of 'Los Niños Españoles y las Brigadas Internacionales' (1938).

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IBMT President Marlene Sidaway chairs the conference.



Dr Fraser Raeburn.

# Spotlighting the Scottish Brigaders

The IBMT's 2022 Len Crome Memorial Conference, held on 19 March, explored the importance and legacy of those International Brigade volunteers who went from Scotland to Spain to fight fascism. More than 50 supporters gathered at the University of Edinburgh for what was the first in-person Len Crome event in three years.

Each of the three main speakers, historian Fraser Raeburn, Spanish democratic memory campaigner Máximo Molina and IBMT Scotland Secretary Mike Arnott, addressed the theme of Scotland and the Spanish Civil War in different ways.

The conference began with a talk by Professor Peter Crome, the son of doctor and International Brigader Len Crome, after whom the annual conference is named. Peter Crome presented records of his father's life, detailing his time as a medical student at Edinburgh University in

the 1930s, the early development of his left-wing politics and his struggle against fascism from his time in the International Brigades through to his service in the Second World War.

Mike Arnott provided an overview of the various ways Scottish International Brigaders have been celebrated and commemorated across the nation over the past two decades.

He listed Scotland's range of plaques, sculptures, plays, documentaries and books that have helped preserve their memory, many of them initiated and supported by the IBMT.

For the keynote session of the conference, Dr Fraser Raeburn presented some of the key topics and content of his recent history of the Scottish volunteers, 'Scots and the Spanish Civil War' (2020). Raeburn considered explanations for why such a proportionally high number of Scots volunteered for the International Brigades.

The final conference speaker was Máximo Molina, president of the Association for the Recovery of Historical Memory (ARMH) Cuenca, who spoke about the organisation's ongoing projects to uncover, exhume and restore anti-fascist history.



Professor Peter Crome.



IBMT Scotland Secretary  
Mike Arnott.



Len Crome conference attendees at stalls in the venue lobby.



## NEWS

# Hundreds march on Jarama anniversary

The International Brigade Memorial Trust keeps alive the memory and spirit of the men and women who volunteered to fight fascism and defend democracy in Spain from 1936 to 1939

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The annual Battle of Jarama Memorial March saw over 300 people from Holland, Italy, Ireland, Scotland, England, Germany and across Spain, come together to mark the 85th anniversary of the month-long clash, when International Brigaders and their Republican allies desperately defended Madrid from fascist encirclement.

This year's event, held on 19 February and organised by the IBMT's Spanish sister-organisation AABI (Asociación de Amigos de las

Brigadas Internacionales), was centered on Ciempozuelos in the Jarama Valley. Fascist forces conquered the town in the opening days of the battle, despite resistance from the Republic's 18th Mixed Brigade.

After attendees completed the march they were welcomed back to Ciempozuelos by the town's mayor, Raquel Jimeno, who read a dedication to the International Brigades and their role in the civil war. This was followed by poetry readings and singing of anti-fascist songs.



◀ Supporters assemble at the town of Ciempozuelos before setting out on the Jarama march.

## Crews who beat the blockade

Two dozen supporters gathered on 5 March to pay their respects at Glasgow's Blockade Runners Memorial, dedicated to the British seafarers who broke the fascist blockade of Spain's ports during the civil war.

Organised by the RMT's Glasgow Shipping Branch, the ceremony was the first since the memorial's unveiling in 2019. Its sculptor, Frank Casey, was invited up from St Albans as a special guest to rededicate the memorial.

IBMT Scotland Secretary Mike Arnott also spoke, highlighting the actions of the blockade runners: taking food and supplies to a beleaguered nation, rescuing countless refugees and even ferrying to Oran those Spanish Republican fighters who went on to join the French Resistance and liberate Paris in 1944. Stuart Hyslop, long-standing member of both the IBMT and the Glasgow Shipping Branch, laid a wreath and paid tribute to the victims of another merchant



▲ Frank Casey speaking at the commemoration.

ship, the *Ciudad de Barcelona*, which was sunk while bringing International Brigade volunteers from Marseilles.

During the Spanish Civil War, 35 Merchant Navy and eight Royal Navy seafarers died and scores were injured on vessels attacked by fascist submarine, naval and aerial forces.





**MEDIC:** Evelyn Hutchins (centre), an American ambulance driver volunteer in the Republican Medical Service, stationed in Tarancón in the summer of 1937.

## REDEEMING THE ANTI-FASCIST DEAD

Leading Spanish democratic memory campaigner **MÁXIMO MOLINA** introduces his recent book chronicling the history of the International Brigades and Republican resistance in the town of Tarancón.

‘Red Tarancón’ is the result of years of activism. The original idea came from our efforts to make our silenced history known in our town and region; simply offering facts as a counterweight to the legacy of Francoist propaganda disguised as history, still so alive in Spain. It has been a long and intense process, with international collaboration and support as well as our own research efforts reflecting that international collective effort to fight fascism that is partly studied in this book. The book brings together Spaniards and international supporters in an antifascist Tarancón, as they often do in our commemorations and activities.

This is by no means an academic work but a

product of activism. Everything from research to layout has been carried out by nonprofessional members of the ARMH (Association for the Recovery of Historical Memory) of Cuenca and all the money made goes to funding our activities. These include researching Francoist repression, helping families search for their missing relatives, erecting memorials to remember victims, or placing plaques on the pavement in front of houses where Republicans who were deported to concentration camps once lived.

‘Red Tarancón’ features a prologue by our comrade and friend Mike Arnott, Scotland Secretary of the IBMT. It provides the reader with an overview of the 12 years of fighting for

the memory of the International Brigades in Tarancón. It begins in October 2011 when Arnott first came, with Allan Craig Jr, to Tarancón cemetery to unveil a memorial and to read, for the first time too, the roll of honour of the Scottish volunteers who fell in the Battle of Jarama. Two poems by our comrade and friend Hamish Drummond are also included, introducing two chapters of the book, both of them inspired by the tribute to the Scottish volunteers and the victims of Franco’s dictatorship held in Tarancón every February

**‘The Spanish had the courage to resist fascism in 1936 and paid an extremely high price for it – we could say we are still paying it.’**

since 2012. A third poem is by Ludwig Detsinyi, later going by the name David Martin in Australia, an International Brigader who must have been in Tarancón during the devastating Condor Legion bombing on 3 December 1937.

The Spanish had the courage to resist fascism in 1936 and paid an extremely high price for it – we could say we are still paying it.

CONTINUED OVERLEAF

# Your local IBMT affiliated memorial group

Several independent locally-based International Brigade memorial groups have sprung up around the country in recent years. The IBMT welcomes this development and supports their work.

IBMT affiliation costs £30. You can affiliate through our website here: [www.international-brigades.org.uk/membership](http://www.international-brigades.org.uk/membership).

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**International Brigade  
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# TARANCÓN

## FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

International volunteers came in solidarity to fight shoulder to shoulder with us and many of them also paid an extraordinarily high price for it. Clearly, if we want to understand these events we will have to study both together. That is exactly what we have tried to do.

The core of 'Red Tarancón' is a historical piece, presented by Nancy Philips from the Friends and Family of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade (FFALB), written together with Ernesto Viñas, from the history blog Brunete en la Memoria. We provide a picture of the military role of Tarancón in the Spanish Civil War; its use as a transport hub to and from Madrid, information about the bombings it suffered and its links with the Republican Army command.

We also tried to outline clearly, as far as documentary sources have allowed us, the

different stages through the war and how logistics were of the utmost importance for a besieged Madrid and its fronts, both for military and civilian supplies. Similarly, Tarancón was planned as the base of an organised resistance should Madrid fall. The plan, though never implemented, would have seen the general staff of the Republic's Central Army transferred to the town in November 1936 and defence lines were drawn up in 1939 in the case of an organised retreat from Madrid.

## Medical

We also study the medical services stationed in Tarancón. Six hospitals operated simultaneously in the town in late winter 1937. One of them belonged first to the 11th International Brigade and then to the 15th Brigade, due to Hungarian surgeon Oskar Goryan being in charge of both units. This



► Clockwise from top left:  
● Patients in Uclés, 1938  
● Sussex International Brigader and medical volunteer Arthur Hirst (centre) in Tarancón in 1937  
● Aftermath of the bombing of the Evacuation Hospital in Tarancón, 1937  
● Republican forces taking the Valencia Road in Tarancón, 1937  
● An operation in Uclés hospital, 1938.



makes their appearance in International Brigade sources confusing. In addition, different hospitals shared a building and Tarancón is no exception. The town appears in a partial way in numerous publications because the sources are scattered and rarely consulted.

Something similar happens with Uclés and Valdeganga hospitals. They were Republican Army hospitals that were already in operation from September-October 1936. Surprisingly enough, all Republican hospitals at this first stage of the war, Tarancón, Uclés, Huete, Quintanar de la Orden and Valdeganga, depended directly on and were funded by the Defence Ministry of the Catalanian government.

That being said, there was a clear lasting connection with the International Brigades. Uclés hospital is a good example; it was staffed by Brigaders after the March 1938 evacuation to Catalonia and received supplies till the end of the war. Valdeganga seems to have been another hospital shared by the International Brigades and Republican Army units.

The paucity of direct documentation of the Republican medical services has forced us to use mostly International Brigade sources: memoirs of volunteers, the Tamiment Library

at New York University, the Moscow social history archives. What we have managed to collect on the Republican medical services has been obtained from civil war bulletins or fragmentarily from military archives.

Local oral sources have been a valuable input too. On the other hand, many of the references we have obtained about Republican

## ‘The paucity of direct documentation of the Republican medical services has forced us to use mostly International Brigade sources.’

hospitals came from indirect sources dealing with repression; firstly court-martials held by Franco's forces once the war ended; secondly, notes taken years ago when studying the death logs of registry offices in district towns of the province. Through this method we have managed to compile a long list of Spanish Republican medical staff serving in the hospitals in our area during the war.

Finally, we have written a brief overview of fascist repression and massacres against the medical services once the war finished. The work concludes with a piece of family history written by our comrade José Luís González, who tells us about one of the many relationships between Spaniards and international volunteers which came out of the war.

We have also been able to document a list of 30 people who died in our hospitals, once again both Spanish and international. They all shared the same fate when the local cemetery was enlarged at the end of the 70s – they vanished. Nobody worried about the families of those resting there, just as nobody worried about the families of the victims of repression, most of whom were locals who could easily be contacted.



Máximo Molina Gutiérrez is president of ARMH Cuenca. 'Red Tarancón: Spaniards and Internationals in a Tarancón at War' (2022) is published by ARMH Cuenca and all proceeds will go towards funding the organisation's activities. It can be ordered by writing to [armhcuenca@gmail.com](mailto:armhcuenca@gmail.com).

# No Pasarán Raffle 2022

The IBMT's annual raffle is online this year. Supporters can buy tickets (£1 per ticket) via RallyUp.

The winner of the first prize will receive **£500** in cash. The second prize is **six bottles of Spanish wine**. There are a host of other prizes for runners-up.

All raffle proceeds help fund the IBMT's educational and commemorative work.

Tickets can be bought from:

[www.go.rallyup.com/ibmt](http://www.go.rallyup.com/ibmt)



Raffle draw  
15 October  
2022



The International Brigades were to an extent defined by their political and social consciousness. Much of the cohort of volunteers who went to Spain were committed to the idea that they were defending the Spanish Republic and fighting alongside its people in their struggle for liberty and social progress. It was precisely these ideas which fascism sought to roll back.

This commitment on the part of the International Brigades can be seen not only in their readiness to fight, and in many cases die, alongside the forces of the Spanish Republic, but also in their concern and support for the population.

Of particular concern were the children of Spain. Over 200,000 child refugees fled war zones as Franco's fascist rebels conquered more territory. The majority of displaced children received assistance from the Republic. They were placed with foster families and in residential schools in the east of the country, away from the front. The international effort which resettled around 25,000 Basque refugees, led by civilians across Europe and the governments of the Soviet Union and Mexico, is relatively well known.

What is less known is that Brigaders and medical volunteers in Spain were active in providing aid for displaced and orphaned children. The Comité Pro-Niños Españoles de las Brigadas Internacionales (The Committee for Children of the International Brigade) came together on the first anniversary of the formation of the International Brigades, coordinating and funding homes for refugee children. The committee's activities were documented in a photo book titled 'Los Niños Españoles y las Brigadas Internacionales' (Spanish children and the International Brigades) published in 1938.

## Initiative

The book was compiled on the initiative of Luigi 'Gallo' Longo, Inspector-General of the International Brigades. 'Los Niños Españoles' features a collection of photographs from across Spain, as well as text and captions in five languages: Spanish, Czech, English, French and German. Its preface is clear about its purpose: 'We hope that this little book will win new friends for the Spanish cause and above all for the Spanish children.'

Separated into roughly two parts; the first half of the book provides an assortment of anecdotes and accounts placed alongside photos of the aftermath of war, children at the front and their interactions with Brigaders.

Early in the first section is an interesting but unattributed letter dated 7 September 1937, supposedly from an International Brigader fighting on the southern front. Writing to his son back home, he emphasises the importance of education

# For the happiness of the children of Spain

**AJMAL WAQIF** considers the connections between the international volunteers in Spain and the children who were displaced and victimised by the civil war.



◀▶ Volunteers of the 13th International Brigade visit an unnamed school.

as a part of the anti-fascist struggle: 'As soon as we Internationals come to a new place where there are no schools we help at once to organise them. If you think it over you will understand how important this is. For we lead this war not only with cannons. You also, dear, must learn as much as possible.'

This part also presents a few anecdotes: a Chinese volunteer speaks to a group of children who express concern about fellow children in China, a German volunteer attends a Christmas celebration at a children's home in Madrid and an unspecified Brigader unit throws a party for children in a village, pulling together what meagre resources they had.

## 'Brigaders and medical volunteers in Spain were active in providing aid for displaced and orphaned children.'

Photo sets titled 'Bombardment' and 'Evacuation' have grim photos of children killed from fascist bombing raids or being evacuated from battle zones. 'In every region, wherever the fascists attack, the people flee. They come with the remains of their belongings on foot, with mule carts, on

trucks, with countless children,' states the caption.

The second half of the book highlights several residences established for refugee and orphaned children. It details the activities run for the children in a home operating in the requisitioned castle of Moraleja near Madrid. Further along it discusses the town of Benisa, south of Valencia, where anarchist workers and convalescing International Brigaders worked together to set up a home and school for refugee children, naming the building 'Solidaridad'.

The International Brigades also had a hospital in the beachside resort of Benicasim, with one large country house set aside for orphans from Madrid and Asturias. Wounded Brigaders spent their time in recovery entertaining and playing with the Spanish children: photos show volunteers making toys and an anecdote tells of a Canadian Brigader on crutches at the beach, talking about wooden planes with the children. The concluding pages urge the reader to send goods and raise funds for the provision of further support for the refugee children – in Spain and back at home.

Returning once more to the letter in the opening pages of the book, the Brigader expresses his hope for a peaceful future for all: 'Tomorrow we shall have a party for the children of this place. We love the Spanish children... we do not only fight for the freedom of Spain and for the happiness of those splendid Spanish children, but for the freedom of our own country and your future as well.'





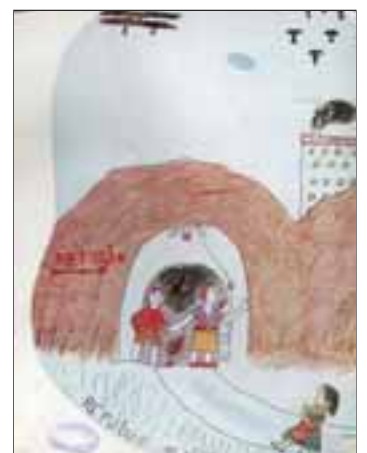
▼ International volunteers and locals salute children at the Solidaridad home for child refugees in Benisa.

▼▼ International Brigader with children gathered at a refugee camp in Murcia.

► Cartoon drawn by an International Brigader for refugee children.

► An International Brigader makes toys out of pine cones and wood for refugee children in a home at Benicasim.

▲ Spanish children's drawings representing (from left) Rebel planes bombing the city of Toledo, the bombing of a street in Madrid and children hiding in a *refugio* air raid shelter.



# The Basque evacuation 85

After the bombing of the Basque town of Gernika on 26 April 1937, there was outrage around the world that civilians – particularly children – could be targeted in such a cruel and calculated way. Improvised air raid shelters were made in cellars, railway tunnels and underground systems in major cities throughout Republican Spain. Civilian populations were moved away from the cities. Some children who were away by the sea or in the countryside on their summer break stayed where they were. How were aid organisations and governments to respond? How were individuals to act?

Britain and other major western European powers, citing a commitment to non-intervention, refused to extend humanitarian aid to Spain. The British government, under both Stanley Baldwin and his successor Neville Chamberlain, was not

**‘New democracies make novel policies, and so the Basque government developed a plan to evacuate its civilian population by sea.’**

formally concerned with feeding and preserving the lives of Spanish civilians. Meanwhile Save the Children (STC) and the Quakers took the view that humanitarian aid should be non-partisan and that refugees should be settled in neutral zones, but as close to their homes as possible. Money raised from donations, collections and events organised across Britain by the Joint Committee for Spanish Relief went to STC and the Quakers to support feeding stations and colonies that they organised. A rather different approach to the humanitarian disaster in the north of Spain developed between the Basque government and Aid Spain committees that sprung up in the UK, France, Belgium, Mexico, and the Soviet Union.

## Bombing

The bombing of the Basque towns of Durango on 31 March 1937 and then Gernika a few weeks later represented a new and very shocking type of warfare. Though initially directed at small towns, the grim success of the operations proved to the Luftwaffe that a mixture of high explosives and



**SIMON MARTINEZ** writes about the significance of the mass evacuation of Basque children in May 1937 and the support efforts organised by people in Britain.

incendiary devices could both terrorise and demoralise the civilian population who provided the support base for the Republican government. It could also remove obstacles to armies crossing the country to achieve strategic gains. By moving armies along main roads and railway lines, bottlenecks could be removed and the inhabitants terrorised at the same time. It was even better if the civilians then fled away from danger, causing chaos as they went.

The Basque region was granted self-government by Madrid in October 1936 and was the first state to respond to total war anywhere in Europe. What was its response and would it link up with humanitarians in other countries? Asking the population of Bilbao, swollen by refugees flocking into it, to cross Rebel-controlled areas was unthinkable. The message of barbarism broadcast by the fascist forces over the radio had got through and the women, children and elderly people were



# years on

not about to subject themselves to a genocidal bloodbath that the Rebel army had left in its wake as it advanced through Extremadura, and then when it cut the Basque country off from its land border with France at Irún.

## Route

So the land route for evacuation to safety was blocked but the sea route was a possibility. New democracies make novel policies, and so the Basque government of José Antonio Aguirre developed a plan to evacuate its civilian population by sea. It was rejected by STC and neighbouring governments were opposed. So its choice was either to do nothing or work with individuals who thought it could be done. Some 70,000 elderly, women and children were evacuated to France, Belgium, Britain, the Soviet Union and Mexico – 27,000 of whom were unaccompanied children. The campaign organised in Britain and led by the Tory Duchess of Atholl, the Liberal MP Wilfrid Roberts and Labour's Leah Manning persuaded the British government to reluctantly agree to nearly 4,000 refugee children and their accompanying adults entering Britain. The *Habana* arrived with its evacuee passengers on 23 May 1937. Their settlement in Britain was on condition that no public money was used. They

were to be supported entirely by volunteers and voluntary funds. Firstly the children were accommodated in a vast camp in Eastleigh, Hampshire and then in group homes or colonies. The exodus of children had an impact on the children, on Britain, and on those caring for the children. There were about 120 colonies across England, Wales and Scotland.

My father Enrique and his two brothers, Juan Antonio and Tomás, were evacuated on the *Habana*. The presence of these *niños de la guerra* was contested. The government of Chamberlain and the right-wing press wanted them all sent

**‘Their settlement in Britain was on condition that no public money was used. They were to be supported entirely by volunteers.’**

back to Spain. Some children were called troublemakers and ‘reds’. The majority of children returned to Spain by the outbreak of the Second World War whilst 400 remained. Most of the adults did not return to Spain.

The number further reduced up to 1945 with around 250 remaining. These were the children who were most at risk, if they returned to Spain, of

being taken by the state and entered into forced adoptions by Franco-supporting families. The adults were facing trial for rebellion, punishable by capital punishment or life imprisonment, in fascist courts where independent defence was abandoned in the interest of convictions. The Basque government was in exile.

The Basque Children of '37 Association UK (BCA37 UK) records, archives and aims to make this story more widely known. The story is important because it speaks of an alternative to liberal or non-partisan humanitarianism, where aid goes hand in hand with total war, where refugees are left permanently in camps adjacent to war zones. Moved aside, the refugees soon fade from public view.

The association has recently supported local studies of the Basque refugee children. The Havens East project looked at the children moved to East Anglia and 100 Lives tells the stories of refugees who made Lancaster their home.

The lives of International Brigade volunteers and the Basque refugees are intertwined. Consider some examples. The secretary of the Oxford Basque Children Committee was Winifred Carritt and her two sons, Noel and Anthony, volunteered for Spain. Winifred organised the accommodation, fundraising and education of the children. One of those included a very ill 15 year-old boy named José Sobrino Riaño. His death in the Ratcliffe Infirmary caused by both his illness and the building's treatment with arsenic was a tragedy immortalised in Luis Cernuda's poem 'Elegy to a dead boy in England' in which Sobrino turns his face to the wall, refusing the last sacraments. Winifred organised his funeral attended by the

**‘The story is important because it speaks of an alternative to liberal or non-partisan humanitarianism, where aid goes hand in hand with total war.’**

children and their supporters. He is buried in a pauper's grave but his body pre-burial was embalmed – odd given the expense of embalming him. The Oxford Basque Children Committee wanted to send the embalmed body back to Spain but was unable to. Noel Carritt, Brigader and political commissar, was wounded in Spain but returned to action after medical treatment in England. He spoke at Aid Spain meetings in Britain.

CONTINUED OVERLEAF

◀ A child at the Basque refugee 'colony' of Penstone House in Lancing, Sussex, during the winter of 1937. She stands next to a Basque Childrens Committee sign.

► Leaflet produced by the Basque Childrens Committee in late 1937, featuring imagery of the destroyed town of Gernika. It urged the reader to 'adopt' a refugee child by pledging to pay 10 shillings a week.



## FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

Morris and Miriam Clyne, living in Manchester, took in one of the Basque children called Ángel Laria Martínez who was nine years old. Morris and Miriam were both Jewish refugees, from Russia and Poland respectively. Ángel stayed with and then visited the Clyne family home until about 1951. Two of the Clyne daughters married Republican exiles who were interned in a camp north of Manchester. Hilary Jones, one of International Brigader Sam Wild's daughters, remembers Ángel from his visits to her grandparents' home and the BCA37 UK reconnected the two families over Lockdown.

## Helpers

One of the helpers who came with the children on the *Habana* was Cayetana Lozano Díaz, a 22 year-old seamstress from San Sebastián. She went with children to colonies in Worthing, then High Wycombe and Bradford. Her sister Rosa was with the children in Wakefield. Cayetana met James Robert Jump, a local newspaper reporter in Worthing. He afterwards volunteered to fight in Spain. There he was mentioned in despatches for bravery while with the machine-gun company of the British Battalion at the Battle of the Ebro in the summer of 1938. They married soon after his safe return.

Another Worthing volunteer was Christopher Thornycroft. He dropped out of Oxford to join the fight and served mostly with the German-speaking Thälmann Battalion during his 19 months in Spain.

The Thornycroft family were prominent



▲ James 'Jimmy' Jump and Cayetana Lozano Díaz with Basque children in Worthing in 1937.

supporters of the three homes for Basque children in Worthing and nearby Lancing. Mother Dorothy chaired the local Basque children's refugee committee and daughter Kate was its secretary. Younger daughter Priscilla, meanwhile, was active in pro-Spanish Republican activities in the Artists International Association.

Doubtless there are many more links between those who volunteered from Britain to fight fascism in Spain and the families displaced by the civil war.

*Simon Martinez is a Trustee of the Basque Children of '37 Association UK. For more on the arrival of the Habana, the refugee children, Havens East or 100 Lives, or if you have any information you would like to share, please contact him at [simonmartinez1937@yahoo.com](mailto:simonmartinez1937@yahoo.com).*



**CAMP:** Basque refugee children and their helpers in Eastleigh, Hampshire, soon after their arrival in Southampton and before they were dispersed to 'colonies' around the country.

Sunday 24 April marked the 90th anniversary of the 1932 mass trespass on Kinder Scout, the gritstone plateau of peat bogs and heather moorland in the Peak District. It lies between the industrial cities of Manchester and Sheffield and other towns of the Pennine coalfields that powered the industrial revolution. Working people were fighting for the right to roam the moorland, for fresh air and space for recreation.

In the hungry 1930s things were grim up north. The 1926 general strike, mass unemployment, hunger marches and the rise of fascism motivated political demands for change and there was a right-wing backlash against the revolutionary movement.

For young people, rambling offered a welcome relief from the dole and pollution and a chance to explore both new landscapes and discuss revolutionary ideas. They were 'free men and women on Sunday' and wanted more freedom to roam the old commons which had been enclosed under private ownership. Kinder Scout was forbidden territory dedicated to grouse-shooting interests, with gamekeepers who managed the high moors and kept trespassers off the land.

Clem Beckett, the popular dirt track motorbike rider and ex-blacksmith of Oldham, and Bernard (Benny) Rothman an engineer and trade unionist from a Cheetham, north Manchester family of Romanian Jews were communists and vice presidents of the British Workers' Sports Federation (BWSF). From 1928 it was essentially a wing of the Communist Party, as part of its 'class against class' line. Clem was a vocal opponent of 'capitalist sport' and the stadium owners, fighting for fair pay and

**'As many as 16 Kinder trespassers went out to Spain, of whom 10 fell in battle.'**

safety policies for riders. Benny, as a cyclist and rambler, saw the landowners as the enemy who represented the complete private ownership of the countryside. The trespass was to be reported in the BWSF publication, *The Worker Sportsman*. It was intended to start a wave of access events and public campaigns. Clem fired a broadside against the bosses and wrote 'Speed and Spondulicks'. Benny took on the leadership of the trespass. Young people from the regular Rowarth camp had been turfed off Yellowsacks, on the slopes of Bleaklow, by keepers. They were determined to organise a larger demo and trespass. The ramble was advertised in the press and by leaflets and word of mouth.

Word got around and about 400 assembled at





Maurice Levine (left), Kinder Scout trespasser, with fellow Manchester volunteer Eddie Swindells en route to the Madrid front with the 14th International Brigade, 10 January 1937.

# Rambling to Spain

**MIKE WILD** tells of the links between the International Brigaders and the mass trespass of Kinder Scout in April 1932.

Hayfield and other parties came over from the Sheffield side to meet up with the main party. After an initial meeting in Bowden Bridge quarry, where Benny told of the history of enclosures and the struggle for access and the need for political discipline, the party moved off up Kinder Road.

On a signal from a whistle they left the public footpath and headed up to Sandy Heys in the direction of Kinder Downfall. A confrontation with a group of keepers, 20 to 30 in all, and a scuffle involving trespassers Wilfred 'Woolfie' Winnick and Maurice Levine left one man injured but able to walk back to Hayfield.

After a celebratory meeting it was decided to return by the ways they had come. Back in the village of Hayfield the ramblers halted and the police who had been alerted arrested five men and took them to the lock-up. The young men were bailed and the trial was fixed for Derby Assizes in July. They were charged with riotous assembly. Harry Mendel was acquitted but five were sentenced to various terms up to six months maximum initially at Leicester jail. Judge Acton made a point of mentioning the 'foreign names' of Rothman, Nussbaum and Clyne.

The jailing of the ramblers and what some established groups called the 'communist stunt' had a large impact and spread like a moorland fire, with large numbers turning up to further meetings. The ultimate goal was the establishment of national parks and legislation to allow rights of way. As the campaigns grew over the years these were eventually achieved. The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 was a major landmark and the original trespassers who were prosecuted and jailed are now celebrated. The 90th anniversary celebrations this year were very well attended and the centenary will be eagerly anticipated.

## Fight

Back in their home towns the young trespassers still had much to fight against. Oswald Mosley, heir of a prominent family of Staffordshire and Lancashire landowners, formed the British Union of Fascists in October 1932. Marches on the streets and fights on the crofts of working-class areas were common. Crowds of young people in wards like Cheetham and Hulme, including Jews and communists, fought back against the fascist Blackshirts.

From 1933 onwards demonstrations against the Blackshirts mirrored those in other communities. At rallies they chanted 'Bye Bye Blackshirt!' as a song of triumph. Meanwhile, they saw the rise of fascism in Europe and the support of the ruling class for the policy of appeasement and non-intervention at government level. Mussolini and Hitler grew ever more powerful and anti-war sentiment changed as the threat grew at home. There were more calls to meet force with force.



▲▲ Trespassers marching up from Bowden Bridge.

▲ North-West IBMT members Robert Hargreaves and Paul Ward at an IBMT stall on the anniversary event weekend, 23 April 2022.

Those same young trespassers became potential fighters and when Franco's rebel generals led the coup against the democratic Republican government of Spain, there was a call to 'Aid Spain' and take up arms. The Cheetham Challenge Club and other political groups organised food and medical aid ships and ambulances. Amongst the early volunteers who had been on the mass trespass to volunteer for the International Brigades were Clem Beckett, 'Woolfie' Winnick, Maurice Levine and Arthur Newsome of Sheffield. Benny Rothman volunteered to join as an ambulance driver but was turned down due to inexperience and his value on the home front.

We have delved in the archives and personal memoirs and so far have established that as many as 16 Kinder trespassers went out to Spain, of whom 10 fell in battle, a very significant number. The survivors, many wounded, came home from the Spanish Civil War and either joined the forces in the coming Second World War, which many of them had predicted, or were turned down by the authorities as prematurely anti-fascist. They carried on their activities and supported their defeated Republican comrades.

*Mike Wild is the son of International Brigader Sam Wild, the last commander of the British Battalion.*

# The arrival of Hans Bauer

There is no doubt that the period between 1930 and 1939 was one of the most tumultuous in the 20th century. The rise of fascism across Europe and the rest of the world is well documented. The legacy of the resulting conflicts can still be witnessed in modern times. Bouncing between these struggles was a young European man who came to reside in the north-west of England.

Hans Bauer was both adventurous and quite possibly naïve. In his 20s he became embroiled in a series of actions that had far reaching consequences for himself and those people who came to his aid. It seemed that he had fought for the International Brigades in the Spanish Civil War, had been injured in that conflict and then been invalided out of the campaign. After being wounded in Spain, Bauer was evacuated to France and from there he managed to travel to the UK. By the summer of 1938 Hans Bauer had made his way to Liverpool and a man named 'Raylock' delivered him to the home of the Walbanks. Frank William Walbank was a lecturer in Latin at the University of Liverpool and both he and his wife had joined the Communist Party of Great Britain in 1934 and were supportive of international left-wing causes. Mary Walbank was secretary to the local Spanish Medical Aid Committee and Frank Walbank was chair of a China Campaign group set up in response to the Japanese invasion.

**‘Hans informed them that he was a Czechoslovak citizen and the political situation had become unfavourable for him to return.’**

Frank Walbank and his wife agreed to accommodate Bauer for a few days until his initial difficulties were solved. Hans informed them that he was a Czechoslovak citizen, the Germans had overrun his home country during the annexation of the Sudetenland during the latter half of 1938 and thus the political situation had become unfavourable for him to return home. Mary Walbank wrote to various committees and even approached the Communist Party in an effort to aid the

unfortunate young man. In seeking advice, Frank Walbank consulted with a professor of law at the university where he worked. Professor Lyon Blease introduced Walbank to an enlightened solicitor, Hamish Craig, who suggested writing to the Home Secretary in an attempt to receive guidance and to legalise the position of the unfortunate Czech. Nothing came of this appeal. A shipping company offered to provide free passage to China for Hans but only if his position in the UK had been ratified. Frank and Mary Walbank pursued many different avenues to obtain support for Hans Bauer. They contacted Eleanor Rathbone, their local MP, whose efforts in the case were in vain. The New Zealand authorities were approached since they had offered to take European refugees but would only do so if his position were legalised.

After several months, the burden of harbouring Hans began to take a toll on Mary Walbank who was pregnant at the time. Her husband appealed to a group of friends to contribute two shillings and sixpence each week for the rent of a room in the Liverpool 8 district, there being a little left over each week to allow Bauer to visit a *kaffeehuas*.

## Impasse

By September 1939 – the start of the Second World War – they had reached an impasse with Hans. Letters to the Home Office had either been ignored or overlooked and all other schemes to assist the unfortunate Sudetener had amounted to nothing. Accompanying Hans to the police station in Dale Street, Liverpool, Frank Walbank told them that Hans was a Czechoslovak citizen who had been living illegally in Liverpool for approximately one year. They were sent to an office that had been set up at the Northwestern Hotel, Lime Street, where the authorities detained Hans. Walbank unwittingly then made a statement detailing the support that he had given Bauer.

Hans Bauer was initially remanded for seven days for contravention of the 1920 Aliens Order after appearing before the Liverpool Deputy Stipendiary, SCV Addinsell. The order was a statutory instrument that required all aliens seeking residency or employment to register with the police and a central register of aliens, to be maintained under the direction of the Home Secretary. He was remanded for a further seven days before finally appearing before the Liverpool Police Court.

Smartly dressed and standing at over six feet in height, Hans cut an imposing figure in court; he stated that he wanted to fight for England against the Nazis and pleaded for the court not to be too hard on him. He was sentenced to one month's

hard labour with a recommendation for deportation.

By the time that the 1939 National Registration Act was enforced, on 29 September 1939, Hans Bauer was resident at HMP Walton, Liverpool. He gave his occupation as that of an electrotherapy/mechanical therapy masseur, there having been some confusion over his occupation at his various court hearings. The war had begun to accelerate at a furious pace; Bauer found himself appearing before a tribunal for alien internees. On 8 November it was decided that he was to be put in a specialist camp in Seaton, Devon. It was in fact a converted Warners holiday camp that had previously played host to families on holiday. His file records that his nationality was doubtful but a written note on it said that he was to be released as a special case in December 1939 without any restrictions. Upon his release he thanked all those people who had assisted him and stated that he felt he had received fair play and justice.

Whilst living in Liverpool Hans Bauer had come



Frank William Walbank at the Bassae archaeological site in Oichalia, Greece in 1936.



**LEE RICHARDSON** writes about the conflicting record of a German-speaking Spanish Civil War volunteer who sought refuge in England. The enigmatic Hans Bauer received support from Aid Spain campaigners Frank and Mary Walbank.



◀ Photo of Hans Bauer used in the *Liverpool Evening Express*, 27 November 1939.

The accused requested an adjournment to allow important witnesses to be summoned that included Graham White, a radical Liberal politician and MP for Birkenhead East; Geoffrey Lloyd, former Under-Secretary of State for the Home Office and Osbert Peake, the current Under-Secretary of State. The thrust of the legal argument lay in the fact that Graham White MP had approached the Home Office on the matter of Hans Bauer, and that the Under-Secretaries knew the facts of the case.

#### Defendants

When the defendants reappeared at Liverpool Police Court on 15 November 1939, they were met by the news from the prosecutor that the charge of harbouring the alien subject was to be withdrawn. Information had become known regarding the contact between the defendants and the Home Office earlier in the year when advice had been sought relating to the issue of Bauer. It was felt to be improper proceeding with that particular charge when no advice had been forthcoming from the Home Office. The charge relating to the aiding and abetting of Bauer remained for most of them. Their defence was to no avail and the presiding magistrate GC Mort found them guilty and fined them £5 each.

After the outbreak of the war, Frank and Mary Walbank discovered that Hans' story was a little more complicated than they had first been led to believe. It would seem that Hans had left the central region of Europe in the mid-1930s and travelled to Ethiopia to fight on the side of Mussolini's fascist forces. The invasion of Ethiopia by Italian forces in October 1935 signalled the start of the expansionist policy that was to become a feature of dictatorships within that decade. Bauer appears to have fought on the side of the fascists again when he travelled across to the Iberian Peninsula to join Franco's Nationalists. He was captured by the Republican forces, interrogated, and subjected to a conversion to the Republican cause after hearing government propaganda. Hans Bauer joined the International Brigades and fought with the 11th Brigade in the Edgar André Battalion, named in honour of the German communist executed in 1936. This battalion was made up of German and Austrian volunteers. By this time Bauer was using an Austrian passport in the name of Johannes Hoerzer. In Albacete, he had caused a near mutiny in the

central barracks there when used by the barracks commander as an interpreter. He misinterpreted the instructions to be given to the volunteers and a fight had ensued.

Bauer was regarded with suspicion during his time in Spain. He made various claims about his background: he told one friend that he had come directly from Vienna, to another he said that he had come from Central Africa via Nubia and Libya. He could speak several languages proficiently, having allegedly studied at the Higher School of Foreign Languages in Rome.

He eventually was given the position of commandant of a ward in a hospital, but both the doctors and patients found his manner to be provocative. He was then sent to Murcia where

**'He thought of [Hans] to be more of an adventurer than someone who would fight for principles.'**

comrades recognised him as being from Karlsbad in the Sudetenland. They remarked that he had been a member of the German Sports Union and noted his previous fascist sympathies, though in a letter that Bauer had written to a Marianne Hahn in Karlstad he mentioned that 'Man can change his policy once. I've had enough of Hitler and Mussolini.' Hans was sent with an anti-tank unit to the front and was wounded whilst fighting with the International Brigades. The doctor that treated him was called Dr Kisch, who later met Frank Walbank in England and confirmed at least this part of Hans' story.

#### Met

Frank and Mary Walbank met Hans a few times during the 1940s, although their reception was decidedly cooler than previously. He had moved to Manchester and opened a restaurant, eventually settling in the area, remarrying and raising another family. He successfully applied to become a British national in 1948. With his death in 1976 came the revelation of another possible name – Hans von Falkenau! The prefix 'von' being an indication of German-speaking nobility.

Walbank was not surprised when he learned all of this information about Hans. He thought of him to be more of an adventurer than someone who would fight for principles. Whatever his opinion of this extrovert, young European, it did not cloud his decisions to provide humanitarian assistance when it was required. In later life Walbank expressed no regrets for his actions. He died in 2008, after a long and distinguished academic career.

to the aid of a young lady, Peggy Shimmin, when she had fallen near a tramcar stop, Walbank noted in his memoir that he called her 'Begg' due to his heavily accented English. They became engaged, married in 1940, had two children and settled in the Knotty Ash area of the city.

Those people who had aided Hans during his time in Liverpool now faced prosecution; a summons was issued for them to face allegations of offences against the Aliens Order. This included Walbank, Lyon Bleasde, the solicitor Hamish Craig and others. The charge that they faced was one of harbouring Bauer, having reasonable grounds to believe that this contravened the 1920 Aliens Order and that they aided and abetted him.

The defence's opening statement mentioned the genuine fear of Bauer of being returned to his native country. He had fought against Franco in the Spanish Civil War and had a genuine fear of either being executed or sent to a concentration camp if returned to the Nazi occupied territory. This punishment was meted out to many members of the International Brigades caught up in the European turmoil regardless of their nationality. Walbank had encountered a student on a train in Germany in 1933 who had boasted about concentration camps so was fully aware of the possible fate awaiting the young Sudetener. In his statement to the police Walbank affirmed that any help that he had given Bauer was driven by purely humanitarian motives because he believed that saving a man's life should come before any technical considerations.

# FAN UNFURLS THE STORIES OF MANCHESTER VOLUNTEERS

After reading 'A fan, a photo, and the Spanish Civil War' by Emily Moore and Elizabeth Washburn in *iNo Pasarán!* 3-2021, which reported on a project researching a Spanish hand fan owned by an International Brigader called Johann Maslowski, I was reminded of a similar fan I was shown just a few months prior. Fellow IBMT activist Mike Wild kindly introduced me to Rica Bird while I was researching a group of Manchester volunteers. We talked about her father, Bernard Barry, as he writes about some of these men in 'From Manchester to Spain' (2009). In the course of the conversation she surprised me by casually mentioning that her uncle Wolfie had fought in Spain and had signed a Spanish *abanico* hand fan along with 11 other volunteers.

Wilfred 'Wolfie' Winnick arrived on 1 May 1937. He had travelled to Spain as part of an organised group and it was at the time when a significant number of the initial volunteers were returning home. Thus we see some being repatriated back to the UK and some joining the British Battalion as it was reorganised. Wilfred's group of 32 men were enlisted at Albacete on 13 May 1937. The notebooks show that most of the volunteers in Wilfred's group were members of the South Wales Miners' Federation. In fact, Wilfred was one of only seven in this 'transport' who was not from South Wales.

**‘The discovery of the fan is yet another reminder of our common family pride in [Wilfred] being an International Brigader.’**

Wilfred served with the British Battalion in the 15th International Brigade. He was sent to the Officers Training School, would see action at Belchite, Caspe and the Ebro and was wounded three times. His name had caught my interest earlier as I'd come across him when looking at the 17 members of Cheetham Hill Young Communist League (YCL) who had fought in Spain.

Evidence suggests Wilfred was not a member of the Cheetham Hill YCL group. However, he was a member of a YCL branch in the next district of Manchester. It seems almost certain that he knew the Cheetham men. Strangely enough I already had a copy of his Moscow archive (RGASPI) files because they contain his correspondence with the Cheetham Hill YCL member Iud Coleman.

## 16 ¡NO PASARÁN!



recovering from wounds. Jud Coleman and George Westfield had arrived in Spain in December 1936 to initially join the 14th International Brigade, part of the 145 strong English-speaking contingent which comprised the No.1 Company of the French 14th La Marseillaise Battalion. Wolfie Winnick was associated with the group I am studying.

Rica also mentioned that she had been sent a picture of a fan that Wilfred had signed. I think Rica explains what this fan means to her best:

*My mum had four brothers, including Wolfie, and five sisters. For many reasons uncle Wolfie was the favourite uncle of both me and my younger sister. He and my mum were close and often 'on the same wavelength'. So when we lost her suddenly, in 1962, apart from our dad, of course, Wolfie – along with one of our aunts – in particular, helped us to feel linked to the commonly felt inseparable bond with parents that youngsters have and retain, as adults, long after they have departed. Wolfie would visit our house often with his younger son, our cousin Peter, a similar age to us. Wolfie had transport, and would take us to Blackpool for the day. Also Peter enjoyed 10-pin bowling, and my sister and I went along with them. In a way, in hindsight, I think this connection between us helped each of us with our Individual grieving process. My sister and I still have a good relationship with Peter, and he and I exchange related IBMT info with each other from time to time, as well as family matters.*

*So, the discovery of the fan, by remote, long-winded means, is yet another reminder of our common family pride in his being an International Brigader, as well as his exploits on the 1932 great Kinder Trespass, and my memories of a lively and kind uncle are part and parcel integrated into the canopy of my life.*

The photograph shows only a part of the fan, but we can clearly see 'W Winnick, Fallowfield, Manchester' along with a further 11 names. I traced the signatures I could see and managed to identify each of the men whose names we can see in full. I even found one Teesside man: Herbert Riding of Hartlepool, who was 'In charge of Officers mess Tarazona'. Most of the dozen men are from the Manchester area. The exceptions are Herbert Riding, Basil Abrahams from London and Thomas Kane from Glasgow. Kane was the youngest at just 18 years old.

Some of the men have unconventional records. Syd Silvert, from Manchester, was wounded in the hip and side at Jarama but deserted on the first day of Brunete. When he was caught he was sent to Camp Lukacs where he deserted a second time. He was later found in Madrid. Syd deserted a third time and was this time found in Valencia. He spent time in the provincial jail at Albacete. He was released only in May 1939, after the conclusion of the war and the defeat of the Republic.

Syd Silvert was not the only interesting character



Albert Charlesworth.



Herbert H Riding.



Sidney Silvert.



Wilfred Winnick.

who signed this fan. Bert Stubbs has a gloriously hostile note saying he was a 'drunken disruptive element at Tarazona and thoroughly useless individual.' Bert was arrested on 16 May 1938 for insubordination. His record suggests this wasn't the first occasion. Unsurprisingly his assessment is not dissimilar to Syd's: 'Bad. Deserter and disruptor.' This fan brings to light the way men such as these two were dealt with by the authorities. Despite the widely held view that deserters and malcontents were summarily shot, this small sample of men seems to suggest that when dealt with by the Spanish authorities they were more often placed in the support staff behind the lines. A number of the other men who have signed the fan served either on the Brigade staff, in the auto park or in the field kitchens.

This is not to suggest they are all malcontents – Syd and Bert actually seem to be the exceptions in this group. Basil Abrahams from London, for

## **‘What began as a simple exercise has highlighted the variety of the volunteers’ experience in Spain.’**

example, had arrived in Spain in December 1936. He was part of the group of No.2 Company men captured at Jarama. Basil was released by the fascists on 30 May 1937 but took the risk of being executed if captured a second time and returned to Spain four months later, serving during the Aragón retreats and at Teruel in the Commissariat. He was repatriated with the British Battalion in December 1938.

Albert Charlesworth, from Oldham, had arrived in Spain in late November 1936 with Cheetham Hill YCL members Jud Coleman, Maurice Levine and Ralph Cantor. He served with them in the British Battalion until he was sent to Camp Lukacs in August 1937 – this was in order to repatriate him home for being underage. Albert apparently left of his own accord via Barcelona but returned to Spain six weeks later over the Pyrenees. He continued to serve as a postman and runner right up until the International Brigades were withdrawn and then repatriated.

Fred Pearson and Wilfred Winnick both



▲ Reverse of Wilfred Winnick's hand fan.

participated in the mass trespass of Kinder Scout in 1932 and we see them reunited in Spain. Fred served as a chauffeur in the 15th Brigade auto park from July 1937.

Wolfie served throughout the two years, from December 1936 to the repatriation of the British Battalion. At Ripoll he had received the honour of becoming a member of the Spanish Communist Party, something Rica was pleased to hear.

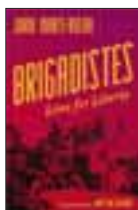
Sadly I found that one of the dozen men whose name can be seen on the picture of the fan had been killed. Harry Brookes of Ormston arrived in Spain in February 1938 and was killed during the siege of Gandesa. Brookes' time in Spain provides us with the five-month window in which this fan could have been signed; from his arrival at the end of February until 31 July 1938 when the siege began.

What began initially as a relatively simple exercise in finding a dozen men in the records has in fact highlighted the variety of the volunteers' experiences in Spain. This record they made for their friends and comrades has helped us towards understanding the complexity of the war in Spain. As Emily Moore and Elizabeth Washburn wrote about their own research project: 'Objects such as these bring stories from the past to life.' We know each individual had a unique experience but here they shared something in common: sometime in the first half of 1938 they felt a camaraderie which they wished to preserve.

'It's so interesting that other former International Brigaders and families also have recollections of such fans,' writes Rica. 'It seems it was not so uncommon for returning Brigaders to sign and bring them home.' Interesting and enlightening, I may add, as it enriches our understanding of the specific roles many volunteers played in the civil war. I am grateful to Rica for sharing the image of this special artefact.

# Vignettes of those who went to Spain

**'Brigadistes: Lives for Liberty'**  
by Jordi Martí-Rueda,  
foreword by Jordi Borràs and  
translated by Mary Ann  
Newman (Pluto Press, 2022).



This book first appeared two years ago in Catalan and Pluto Press have now published an English version. The author, Jordi Martí-Rueda, is a Catalan historian specialising in the Spanish Civil War and International Brigades. The book is constructed in an unusual, but refreshing, way and is variously described as a 'sampler of men and women from all over the world', and a 'book of literary and photographic portraits.' Each of the 60 portraits occupies just two pages of the book, with one of those pages containing a beautifully reproduced photograph, usually of the subject. Little space is given over to direct quotes as there are just 24 in the whole book and they are carefully referenced at the end.

Few of the portraits attempt to give a complete biography of the subject. The author generally focuses on one particular episode of their life, and their connection to the war in Spain. This may mean describing the heroic

**'The style he adopts is that of a novelist who is telling a story based on all of the available evidence.'**

lengths some had to go to simply to get to Spain or their involvement in one particular battle. The style he adopts is that of a novelist who is telling a story based on all the available evidence, allowing the reader to get a sense of the person being written about but without stretching credulity in any way. Judging by the length of his list of sources and bibliography at the end of the book, Martí-Reuda has clearly read widely and been meticulous in his research.

The foreword is written by Jordi Borràs, the eminent Spanish journalist and photojournalist. He grew up in the 1980s near the foot of the Sierra Pandols mountains with his childhood

education including learning how to identify the origins of any bullet and which side used it. These early experiences have clearly left their mark as his knowledge and emotional connection to the topic are clear.

He beautifully sums up the effect of Martí-Reuda's style by writing that 'the brevity of the stories allows our imaginations to soar. To stop and take a breath between pages as we absorb these incredible stories, trying to rush beyond the limits of what is written to fill in the stories of lives deserving of a novel, of a widescreen movie, with popcorn in hand and eyes wide open with astonishment.'

In his introduction Martí-Reuda speculates about the thoughts that must have conflicted Frank Ryan when he realised his senior officer was ex-Black and Tan George Nathan. Their backgrounds, politics, and very demeanours could not have been more different and he suggests it would have been 'impossible to find two more antithetical characters'. Yet, whatever went before was forgotten in the trenches when faced with a common enemy, as it was with the many thousands of International Brigaders from all over the world who had come together in Spain with one thought in mind – to defeat fascism.

## Portraits

Of the portraits that follow, over 20 are of women, mainly but not entirely nurses, and the portraits of men include doctors and other non-combatants. Although there are many names and photographs that will be familiar to IBMT members: Nathan, Ryan, Penny Feiwei, Nan Green, Len Crome, Salaria Kea, Charlie Donnelly, and Oliver Law. However, there are a lot more names which will be unfamiliar, especially if, like me, you are confined to books written in English.

A good example is that of the very first portrait, titled 'The Bravest Woman in Barcelona', which is of Dutchwoman Fanny Schoonheydt. She had escaped what had seemed a humdrum life in Rotterdam and gone to live in Barcelona, only for the *coup d'état* to break out. Shortly afterwards she left to fight on the Aragón front and was only deprived of her machine gun when wounded. She was lauded by the press who described her as the machine gun queen and the



▲ Fanny Schoonheydt, Dutch volunteer in the Spanish Republican militia, on the Aragón front in August-September 1936.

bravest woman in Barcelona. The author manages to squeeze into the single page that she became known to Marina Ginestà, the militiaman who featured in the amazingly iconic photograph with a rifle on her shoulder pictured on a rooftop in Barcelona.

Typically this is where this story ends, and we are left to wonder what happened next. Did she survive and have a good life, which her bravery and commitment deserved? There is plenty of encouragement to search the bibliography for the source most likely to tell the rest of her story.

There is also a picture and story of the three Nielsen brothers who took weeks to cycle from their home in Copenhagen to Spain in August 1936. They fought with the Thälmann Battalion, and, by some miracle, all three survived and returned home. Sadly, like so many of those fortunate to survive Spain, they were soon caught up in the Second World War, which was ultimately to claim the life of the youngest brother.

The story of István Bakallár is a stark contrast. His journey to Spain began on release from a



Hungarian prison, under surveillance and without a passport. He escaped Hungary through the forests, was aided by anti-Nazi Austrian farmers and arrested by Mussolini's fascist police. He forced his release through a hunger strike, managed to get to Switzerland and then to Paris,

## ‘Whatever went before was forgotten in the trenches when faced with a common enemy’.

where the Communist Party enabled his crossing of the Pyrenees into Spain. Here his story ends, at least as far as this book is concerned.

These are just three of the 60 fascinating stories in the book, which is certainly worthy of a place in any of our book collections. It would also make a very good gift to somebody as an introduction to the Spanish Civil War as it provides such a good flavour of all those who fought in Spain.

The final word must go to Jordi Borràs who notes in the foreword: ‘It is no secret that, if we are not capable of understanding our own history, we will be condemned to repeat it. Let us read, then, because there is no greater vaccination against the virus of fascism than the knowledge of a past that should be more present than ever.’

ALAN LLOYD



▲ Harald, Kai and Aage Nielsen reading the Danish Communist Party newspaper *Arbejderbladet* in Albacete, February 1937.



◀◀ Irish volunteer Frank Ryan was a leading Irish Republican and had been part of the IRA.



◀ British Battalion volunteer George Nathan had previously served in the British Army and then as an auxiliary in Ireland in the 1920s.

## Sam Russell: witness to momentous events



The main hall of London's Marx Memorial Library was at capacity on the evening of 7 April, for the launch of Sam Russell's memoir, titled 'I Saw Democracy Murdered' and published in April by Routledge.

Speakers included Colin Chambers, the book's editor, Ruth Muller, daughter of Sam Russell, IBMT Trustees Jim Jump and Dolores Long, with the latter chairing the meeting. The discussion was prefaced by a film, produced by the IBMT's Film Coordinator



◀ Editor Colin Chambers at the Marx Memorial Library for the launch of 'I Saw Democracy Murdered'. Also pictured is IBMT Trustee Dolores Long.

Marshall Mateer and dedicated to Russell, documenting his involvement in the IBMT and his election to Chair in 2006.

Dolores Long pointed out how unique it was that Russell, as an International Brigader in Spain and later international correspondent for the *Daily Worker*, personally witnessed many of the great events of the 20th century: the Spanish Civil War, the

Cuban Missile Crisis, the Vietnam War, the overthrow of Chilean President Salvador Allende and much more. Along the way his own political conscience shifted. The event concluded with a lively discussion and wine reception.

*'I Saw Democracy Murdered' by Sam Russell, edited by Colin Chambers, is available from Routledge now.*

## New perspectives on Orwell memoir



**'Homage to Catalonia' by George Orwell, introduction by Helen Graham (Macmillan Collector's Library, 2021).**

Leading Spanish Civil War historian Helen Graham has written an introduction for the 2021 republication of George Orwell's 'Homage to Catalonia'.

The book has led 'a long and fraught afterlife', Graham notes. It has often been misused and misunderstood by 'purblind political commentators determined to prove that the immensely complicated world of wartime Republican Spain could be reduced to a Cold War parable of "Communist control", or even more ahistorically, to "Soviet control of the Spanish Republic".'

Given that it is probably the most widely read book in English about the Spanish Civil War, Orwell's account presents problems for historians of the war, says Graham. It lends itself to misinterpretation 'by what he left out or was silent on, as well as by what he simply could not have been expected to know or understand'.

Helen Graham, who is an IBMT Patron, is the author of several books on Spain's civil war, including 'The Spanish Civil War: A Very Short Introduction' and her most recent, 'Interrogating Francoism: History and Dictatorship in Twentieth-Century Spain'. She is currently working on a history of Franco's prison system.

In her introduction to Orwell's memoir she explains how the author served in the militia of the POUM Marxist workers' unity party in Aragón

**'Missing from the events described by Orwell is the wider war, with Hitler and Mussolini arming Franco to the hilt.'**

and was also a witness to the bloody street battles in Barcelona in May 1937. These were between the POUM and anarchists on one side and, on the other, government forces wanting to take charge of official buildings such as the central telephone exchange. The government prevailed after five days of fighting and those in the POUM in Barcelona who had



▲ A barricade in Barcelona during the 'May Days' clashes of 1937.

► Postcard produced by the National Council of Labour in solidarity with the Spanish Republic, February 1938.

opposed the government were charged and imprisoned. POUM leader Andreu Nin was tortured and died in custody.

The Spanish Republican government's actions, taken with the full backing of the communists, formed part of efforts to assert control over Catalonia's factories and Aragón's food production in order to maximise the war effort. This meant dismantling the anarchist-led collectivist revolution that had taken place in both regions after the July 1936 military uprising.

In sympathy with the underdogs, Orwell turned his memoir, writes



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Graham, into 'an elegy to a lost revolution'. He was also angry at what he saw as the dishonest depiction in the communist press of the POUM as pro-Franco fifth columnists.

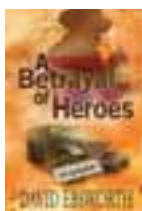
Orwell's writing has much to commend it, particularly its 'unadorned style', 'compelling immediacy' and the 'luminous humanity radiating through its pages'. Examples are the memorable despatches from the trenches in Aragón, describing the smell of excrement and decaying food, the ubiquitous lice and the tedium and terror of war. Then there is the author's powerful evocation of an unknown

## Thriller follows Spaniards who liberated Paris

**'A Betrayal of Heroes' by David Ebsworth (SilverWood Books, 2021).**

David Ebsworth has had great success writing over 10 novels set in various periods of history but, as he admitted in his article for the *No Pasarán!* 3-2021, the books he has written about the Spanish Civil War are very special to him.

'A Betrayal of Heroes' is the third of his books featuring journalist Jack Telford and begins just



after the end of the Spanish war, and the beginning of the Second World War, when Jack finds himself in French Morocco.

It only takes a few pages for the reader to be totally engrossed in Jack's story, the intrigues he has uncovered in the past, his history of violence, danger, and self-preservation. He has good reason to believe he is being followed, even now, by those who want him silenced forever. There are hints of his past, personal life, and the reasons he has chosen to follow the paths that have been presented to him.

The excitement builds as Jack journeys on and finds himself reporting from all the areas of conflict. We are particularly fascinated by the people he meets. The real events of the war become part of the story, as well as the famous people who left their mark on them. It's an intriguing fact that they were known to have been in the places at the same time

as the fictional Jack Telford. Some we only glimpse as he comes briefly into contact with them, others become friends and confidantes who influence Jack's life.

### Famous

Among the most famous of these was Josephine Baker – the world-renowned singer who received the Croix de guerre and the Légion d'honneur for her wartime service.

Another was a star of 'Gone with the Wind' and many other films of the 1930s, Leslie Howard – his death in an air crash in 1943 is still a subject of speculation. Sultan Mohammed V of Morocco, General Charles de Gaulle, Ernest Hemingway and many others make appearances in the story as Jack witnesses some of the worst battles of the Second World War.

During all the fighting Jack is closest to the exiled Spanish Republican soldiers who had



Italian militiaman he shook hands with when he arrived in Barcelona in December 1936. Confronted with the volunteer's shabby uniform and 'fierce, pathetic, innocent face', Orwell saw clearly that there was no doubt as to who was in the right in the civil war.

### Events

Missing, however, from the people and events described by Orwell is the wider war, with Hitler and Mussolini arming Franco to the hilt and Britain preventing the Republic from buying arms to defend itself. Graham writes: 'In narrating the May Days in "Homage to Catalonia" he narrows the focus greatly and sticks entirely with his own "street view" of events...as if they were exclusively about a sectarian political conflict of the Left.'

Orwell wrote his memoir immediately after returning to Britain in June 1937. His view of the broader military and diplomatic context of the war had to wait another five years, until the essay 'Looking Back on the Spanish Civil War', which is included in the Macmillan Collector's Library volume. Here, he finally acknowledges that the outcome of the war was settled not in Spain but in London, Paris, Rome and Berlin.

Yet, as Graham points out, the author, who died of tuberculosis in January 1950, never revised the text of 'Homage to Catalonia' to reflect that conclusion.

**JIM JUMP**

## Longstaff concert recorded by BBC

It was back in 2015, after a performance by The Young'uns in Clevedon, that I was introduced to the folk trio through a mutual friend. I had the chance to speak to the lads about my father John, and his extraordinary life during the 1930s and 40s – from the Hunger Marches, through the Spanish Civil War to the Second World War. I gave them several photographs of my father, a chronological list of things that he had done and, perhaps most importantly, the links to the Imperial War Museum (IWM) oral history archive of my father recalling his many adventures.

I did not hear anything for several months. Then, suddenly, Sean Cooney from The Young'uns called me saying that they were interested in producing a show about Johnny.

In August 2017 I went to FolkEast festival in Suffolk. Whilst there I asked The Young'uns to sing their new song 'Cable Street'. The audience's reaction was tremendous and I recall saying to



Sean, David and Michael that this was something special.

The Ballad of Johnny Longstaff opened on 7 April 2018 at the ARC Theatre in Stockton-on-Tees – the hometown of both my father and the Young'uns. The theatre was packed mostly by local fans. What followed was an impressive tour de force of my father's story, mixed with both sadness and hilarity. I even heard my father's voice during the performance: a skilful sound edit of the IWM tapes. What

followed was a most gratifying and enthusiastic standing ovation from the whole audience. Since that date the show has grown from strength to strength. There have been performances of The Ballad of Johnny Longstaff in over 50 venues in the UK and Ireland.

BBC Radio 3 recently chose to record the show at the ARC theatre in Stockton, in front of a live audience, for later broadcast. I was contacted by Sean a couple of weeks before the 17 March recording with advance notice to book a free ticket.

I managed to get a seat in the front row and the venue gradually filled up to a full house. This was very satisfying as it was being performed during normal working hours. The Young'uns received their usual warm welcome from their hometown audience. The show then began without the normal background set designs, just a straightforward musical performance from Sean Cooney, David Eagle and Jack Rutter (standing in for Michael Hughes).

It was clear they had improved the act over the years and it was good to listen to it in its raw state.

At the end I turned round to witness the usual standing ovation from the Teesside audience.

**DUNCAN LONGSTAFF**



managed to escape from Spain after Franco's victory. Many of the real fighters and their commanders are named and the group fought in a unit of the Free French Army under the nickname La Nueve ('the nine' in Spanish). As David Ebsworth points out in the notes at the end of the

book, they had 'a remarkable war'. They were fighting the same fascist forces they had fought against in their own country, and their great hope was that victory over Hitler would result in the overthrow of Franco and Spain would become a republic again.

◀ Spanish Republican soldier of the La Nueve unit of Leclerc's 2nd Armoured Division. With 'Teruel' half-track vehicle in the Place de l'Hôtel-de-Ville during the Liberation of Paris, August 1944.

Jack sends his reports of La Nueve's triumphs back to newspapers in Britain and the world's press, conscious of the fact that the Spaniards get little recognition for their achievements. There is much prejudice against them from other fighting units and they were often dismissed as 'red scum'. However, their bravery, sacrifices and ingenuity are fully recorded and this historical novel shows how much they deserved their place as the first Allied troops to enter a liberated Paris.

Sadly, as the war comes to its end, the Allied promises of sweeping on into Spain and liberating it from a fascist dictator are forgotten and the betrayal of the title is, sadly, truly felt.

I found that turning the last page gave me a sense of loss – like being on a wonderful, fascinating holiday, which has come to an end. I can fully recommend this book and hope that Jack Telford returns again.

**MARLENE SIDAWAY**

## Photos from the front

We showcase objects brought back from Spain by London volunteer William Leonard Wilson, discovered by his son Joseph Wilson.

The majority of International Brigaders did not keep journals and only a few went on to write memoirs. What most of those who returned did have, however, were objects of their time in Spain, and – as Tony Fox reminds us in his piece earlier in this issue – objects tell stories.

Last year Joseph Wilson sent the IBMT pictures of a set of items belonging to his father, William Leonard Wilson, a painter from south London who went to Spain in December 1936 to fight fascism. The set includes scraps of photographs where he is pictured with other volunteers, a Christmas card sent to the British Battalion, a five peseta coin stamped with his name, and more.

Wilson had a strong record in Spain. He was initially involved in the No. 1 Company of the La Marseillaise Battalion in the 14th International Brigade, a contingent of British volunteers within a French-speaking Brigade. This was prior to the formation of the British Battalion in January 1937. He is reported to have served at Brunete and Aragón in the British Anti-Tank Battery, a unit known for its high morale and respected status. He survived the civil war, was repatriated and lived the rest of his life in south London, passing away in Peckham aged 58.

Identifying who is pictured in the photos and what each of the objects are would reveal more about Wilson and his comrades. Considering just the Christmas card: Joseph Wilson has pointed out that it proves that his father did not leave Spain in late 1937, as was previously thought, but served until at least the spring of 1938. The card is one of those sent to members of the British Battalion during that Christmas and New Year period, signed by Communist Party of Britain General Secretary Harry Pollitt and accompanied by parcels containing treats, toiletries and a pair of Penguin novels.

### Signatures

A closer look reveals a number of other signatures have been added to it, either in transit or after it arrived. These include some of Wilson's comrades from Britain, who also appended where they were from and what organisations they belonged to, such as the Communist Party, Young Communist League, South Wales Miners' Federation and National Unemployed Workers' Movement. We can verify that the following names listed were British Battalion volunteers: Robert Walker and James Rutherford from Edinburgh, Paul Lewis, John H Baker and John Riordan from London, John Ness and Thomas White from Dundee and Thomas Glynn Evans

and Thomas Picton from South Wales.

A few volunteers from other countries also seem to have signed Wilson's card. These include Lincoln Battalion volunteers Curley Kramer (also known as Samuel Mendelowitz) of New York City, Sam Toole of Arlington, Kentucky and Chi Chang of Minnesota – originally from Hunan, China and one of two Chinese among the American volunteers. There is also a volunteer who marks his homeland as the USSR, but whose name is illegible.

Perhaps the most recognisable names on the card are those on the front: beneath Wilson's name and Pollitt's signature is that of Paul Robeson, the pioneering African-American singer, actor and civil-rights activist. An

ardent supporter of the Spanish Republic and the International Brigades, Robeson spoke at a rally in London's Albert Hall, attacking the British government's non-intervention policy in December of 1937. He then went on a tour of Spain in January 1938, accompanied by his wife Eslanda Goode and prominent British communist campaigner Charlotte Haldane, who played an important role in establishing the International Brigade Dependents and Wounded Aid Committee. Haldane's name appears underneath Robeson's. The last of the identifiable signatures is that of Captain Fernando Castillo – assigned as Robeson's military escort during his time in Spain.

*If you are able to identify the people in Wilson's photos or the provenance of his objects, please contact IBMT Executive Officer Ajmal Waqif at [admin@international-brigades.org.uk](mailto:admin@international-brigades.org.uk).*



◀◀ William Leonard Wilson (right) with an unknown comrade.

◀ Unknown International Brigaders posing on a tank.

▶ Wilson (furthest right) with unknown comrades.

▼ Five peseta coin stamped with Wilson's name and an unknown number.

▲ Wilson (right) with unknown comrades.

▼ Wilson's Christmas and New Year card from December 1937, signed by various people.





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**British Battalion mug:** This quality ceramic mug features a design based on the original British Battalion banner brought back from Spain towards the end of the Spanish Civil War. Produced by merchandise specialists Red Molotov. £9 plus £3 p&p.



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They shall not pass!

